REMARKS

This Application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action mailed October 4, 2004. At the time of the Office Action, Claims 1-18 were pending in this Application.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-5 and 7-18 were rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0139975 filed by Thomas J. Perkowski ("Perkowski") in view of U.S. Patent 6,571,234 issued to Timothy O. Knight et al. ("Knight et al.").

Applicants respectfully traverse and submit that, as amended, the claims are not taught or suggested by the cited references.

Claims 1 - 14, 17, 18

As recognized by the Examiner, one point of novelty not taught by Perkowski is the extraction of customer contact data from Internet text sources that are broadcasted to multiple participants, such as newsgroups and discussion forums. The Examiner relies on Knight for this aspect of the invention.

In the first place, there is no motivation to combine the teachings of Perkowski and Knight, and even if there were such motivation, the combination would not result in the present invention.

One of the amendments to Claims 1 and 7 recites that the unstructured Internet text documents are from "discussion sites". This is a good shorthand way to refer to participant-based Internet communities such as those listed in Claims 1 and 7.

With regard to combining the teachings of Perkowski and Knight, the invention of Perkowski is directed to serving a loop of customers, retailers, and manufacturers. The only contact data available to a retailer or manufacturer is contact data about existing customers who have accessed the system. Perkowski does not teach using the system to obtain contact data for prospective customers from Internet discussion sites.

The invention of Knight is directed to serving a community of users on a message board. Knight permits content to be stored, organized and queried by the participants.

Neither Perkowski nor Knight teach or suggest that the community of users taught by Knight may be accessed by a third party retailer or manufacturer for the purpose of obtaining contact information. One novel aspect of the invention is that discussion sites may be "secretly" queried to find persons discussing a particular product or service. That information may then be mined for commercial purposes to obtain contact data, market analysis, and links to the discussion documents for verification.

Even assuming that it is appropriate to combine Perkowski and Knight, the combination would not result in the present invention, as amended.

Claims 1 and 7 have been amended to recite that the text mining process operates independently of, and activation, by the participants. In effect, the text mining process is an "intruder" process.

In Perkowski, actual customers actively input data into the system. Subsequent querying of this data is based on actual (not prospective) customer data. In Knight, the participants' activities are their own queries to the message board. The participants of Knight do not activate an "intruder" type process that is external to the discussion site.

There is no reference that teaches the mining of discussion sites such as those listed in Claim 1 and 7, by an intrusive process that acts in response to a query from an outside enterprise for information about participants that are discussing a particular product or service.

The invention of Claims 1 and 7 goes far beyond a mere search engine -- it is a web-based service accessed by a business enterprise, which not only searches for a particular type of data from a particular type of Internet source, but also provides particular outputs. One of these outputs is theme-type output typical of a text mining system. Claims 1 and 7 have been amended to recite that one of the outputs of the system is "text mining output".

The following is an accepted definition of "text mining" as recited in Claims 1 and 7. Text mining is about looking for regularities, patterns or trends in natural language text, and usually is about analyzing text for particular purposes. Inspired by data mining, which discovers prominent patterns from highly structured databases, text mining aims to extract

useful knowledge from unstructured or semi-structured text. Text Mining (sometimes referred to as Text Data Mining) is a cross-disciplinary field not limited to Internet searching.

Claims 1 and 7 are allowable for the reasons discussed above, as are their dependent claims.

Claims 15 and 16

Claims 15 and 16 are allowable for the additional reason that reverse lookups are not taught by either of the cited references. Claims 1 and 7 recite that the reverse lookup is from sources other than the source of the original contact information. In Perkowski, the same customer who initiates the data acquisition process provides the additional contact information. The teachings cited by the Examiner (Paragraph 672) does not teach or suggest a reverse lookup.

Claims 19 and 20

New claims 19 and 20 are directed to use of the text mining system of Claims 1 and 7 with a profiles generator. These claims are based on Claims 5 and 11 now cancelled.

This aspect of the invention is described in Figures 2 and 4 - 7 and the accompanying text. Neither of the cited references teaches or suggests this aspect of the invention.

Information Disclosure Statement

Applicants would like to bring to the Examiner's attention that Applicants filed an Information Disclosure Statement on August 12, 2004, and although the Examiner indicated in the Office Action dated October 4, 2004, that this Information Disclosure Statement was received and entered into the record as considered, Applicants did not receive the PTO Form 1449 with Examiner's initials. Applicants respectfully request the Examiner return a copy of the PTO Form 1449 as initialed indicating consideration.

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CONCLUSION

Applicants have made an earnest effort to place this case in condition for allowance in light of the amendments and remarks set forth above. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of all pending claims.

Applicants believe there are no fees due, however, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees to Deposit Account No. 50-2148 of Baker Botts L.L.P. in order to effectuate this filing.

If there are any matters concerning this Application that may be cleared up in a telephone conversation, please contact Applicants' attorney at 512.322.2634.

Respectfully submitted,

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